THE SPEECH

OF THE RIGHT HON.

CHARLES JAMES FOX,

ON THE

Speech delivered to the Houſe of Commons,

AT THE

Opening of Parliament, Dec. 13, 1792,

COMMONLY CALLED

THE KING's SPEECH.

With a Liſt of thoſe Patriots who divided in favour of the People

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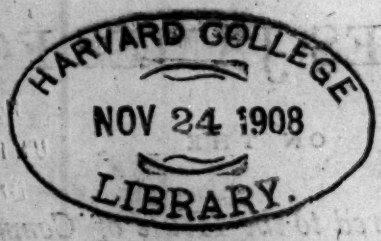

THE SPEECH OF THE Right Hon. Charles James Fox.

After Lord Wycombe ſat down, Mr. Fox ſaid,

ALTHOUGH what has fallen from the Noble Lord behind me contains the ſubſtance of almoſt all that I have to offer, and although it produced the effects which good ſenſe, truth, and ſolid argument, never fail to produce on a great body, the tacit acknowledgment of all who heard him, inſomuch, that no one ſeemed ready to venture to riſe up in anſwer to his Lordſhip, yet I muſt deliver my opinion on this moſt imminent and moſt alarming occaſion. I am not ſo little acquainted with the nature of man, as not to know, that in ſpeaking in public, in order to engage the cordial attention of the hearers, beſides the efficacy of fair and candid reaſoning, a man ought always to be in temper and uniſon with his audience. He ought to ſhew that however they may differ upon points, he purſues in reality the ſame object as themſelves, the love of truth.

With this view, I ſhall ſtate explicitly what are my ſentiments on the ſubject now preſented to us by the ſpeech from the Throne. I ſtate it then to be my opinion, that we are aſſembled at the moſt critical and momentous criſis, not only that I ever knew in the fate of this country, but that I ever read of in the hiſtory of this country---a criſis not merely intereſting to ourſelves and to our own condition, but to all nations and to all men---and that upon the conduct of Parliament in this criſis, depends not merely the fate of the Britiſh Conſtitution, but of doctrines which go to the happineſs and well-being of all human kind. I hope then I am in a temper and uniſon with the Houſe in this declaration of my ſentiments; whether we agree in the motives of our ſentiments we ſhall ſee, for I will as frankly, and as openly as poſſible, communicate my reaſons for conſidering the preſent moment in this alarming light.

His Majeſty's ſpeech is full of a variety of aſſertions, or perhaps I ſhould not make uſe of the word aſſertions, without adding, that it has alſo a variety of inſinuations conveyed in the ſhape of aſſertions, which muſt impreſs every man with the moſt imminent apprehenſions for the ſafety of every thing that is juſtly dear to Engliſhmen. It is our firſt duty to enquire into the truth of theſe aſſertions and inſinuations ſo conveyed to us from the throne. I am ſure I need not recur to the old Parliamentary uſage of deſiring, that when I ſpeak by name of the King's ſpeech, I mean to be conſidered as ſpeaking of the ſpeech of the Miniſters, ſince no one will impute to me the want of the moſt true and ſincere reſpect for his Majeſty. It is to the ſpeech which his Majeſty has been adviſed by his confidential ſervants, to deliver from the Throne. They are reſponſible for every letter of it, and to them, and to them only, every obſervation of Gentlemen is addreſſed. I ſtate it therefore to be my firm opinion and belief, that there is not one fact aſſerted in his Majeſty's ſpeech which is not *falſe*---not one aſſertion or inſinuation which is not unfounded. Nay, I cannot be ſo uncandid as to believe, that even the Miniſters themſelves think them true. This charge upon his Majeſty's Miniſters is of ſo ſerious a kind, that I do not pronounce it lightly, and I deſire that Gentlemen will go fairly into the conſideration of the ſubject,

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and manifeſt the proper ſpirit of the Repreſentatives of the People in ſuch a moment. What the Noble Lord ſaid is moſt ſtrictly true. The great prominent feature of the ſpeech is, that it is an intolerable calumny on the people of Great-Britain; an inſinuation of ſo groſs and ſo black a nature, that it demands the moſt rigorous enquiry, and the moſt ſevere puniſhment. The next aſſertion is, that there exiſts at this moment an inſurrection in this kindom. An inſurrection! Where is it? Where has it reared its head? Good God! an inſurrection in Great Britain! No wonder that the Militia were called out, and Parliament aſſembled in the extraordinary way in which they have been; but where is it? Two Gentlemen have ſpoken in commendation and illuſtration of the Speech, and yet, though this inſurrection has exiſted for fourteen days, they have given us no light whatever---no clue---no information where to find it. The Right Hon. Magiſtrate tells us, that, in his high municipal ſituation, he has received certain information which he does not think proper to communicate to us. This is really carrying the doctrine of confidence to a length indeed---Not content with Miniſters leading the Houſe of Commons into the moſt extravagant and embarraſſing ſituations, under the blind cover of confidence, we are now told that a Municipal Magiſtrate has information of an inſurrection, which he does not chuſe to lay before the Commons of England, but which he aſſures us is ſufficient to juſtify the alarm that has ſpread over the whole country? The Hon. Gentleman who ſeconded the motion tells us, that the "inſur-"rections are too notorious to be deſcribed." Such is the information which we receive from the Right Hon. Magiſtrate and the Hon. Gentleman who are ſelected to move and ſecond the Addreſs. I will take upon me to ſay, that it is not the notoriety of the inſurrections which prevents them from communicating to us the particulars, but their non-exiſtence. The ſpeech goes on in the ſame ſtrain of calumny and falſehood, and ſays---the induſtry employed "to excite diſcontent *on various pretexts*, and in dif-"ferent parts of the kingdom, has appeared to proceed "from a deſign to attempt the deſtruction of our happy "Conſtitution, and the ſubverſion of all order and go-

" vernment." I deſire Gentlemen to conſider theſe words, and I demand of their honour and truth if they believe this aſſertion to be founded in fact. There have been, as I underſtand, and as every one muſt have heard, ſome ſlight riots in different parts; but I aſk them, were not the *various pretexts* of theſe different tumults falſe, and uſed only to cover an attempt to deſtroy our happy Conſtitution? I have heard of a tumult at Shields--- of another at Leith; of ſome riot at Yarmouth, and of ſomething of the ſame nature at Perth and Dundee. I aſk Gentlemen if they believe that in each of theſe places the avowed object of the complaint of the people, was not the real one---that the ſailors at Shields, Yarmouth, &c. did not really want ſome increaſe of their wages, but were actuated by a deſign of overthrowing the Conſtitution. Is there a man in England who believes this inſinuation to be true? And in like manner of every other Meeting, to which, in the preſent ſpirit, men may give the name of tumultuous aſſembling.

I deſire to know if there has been diſcovered any ſecret motive other than their open and avowed one. And yet with this conviction in our minds, we are called upon to declare directly our belief and perſuaſion that theſe things are ſo. We are called upon to join in the libel upon our conſtituents. The anſwer to the ſpeech ſays, that we know of the tumult and diſorder, but as to the actual inſurrection, it more modeſtly makes us ſay, " that we are *ſorry to hear* there is an inſurrection."---Of the tumults and diſorders then we have perſonal knowledge; but the inſurrection we learn from his Majeſty's ſpeech.

I do not wiſh to enter at length into the affairs of France, which makes the next prominent paſſage in his Majeſty's Speech; but though I do not deſire to enter at much length into this part, I cannot conceal my ſentiments on certain doctrines which I have heard to-night. The Hon. Gentleman, who ſeconded the motion, thought proper to ſay, as a proof that there exiſted a dangerous ſpirit in this country, that it was mani eſted " by the drooping and dejected " aſpect of many perſons, when the tidings of Dumourier's " ſurrender arrived in England." What, Sir, is this to be conſidered as a ſtate of diſcontent, and of a preference

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to Republican doctrines. That men ſhould droop, and be dejected in their ſpirits, when they heard that the armies of deſpotiſm had triumphed over an army fighting for liberty; if ſuch dejection be a proof that men are diſcontented with the Conſtitution of England, and leagued with foreigners in an attempt to deſtroy it, I give myſelf up to my country as a guilty man, for I freely confeſs that, when I heard of the ſurrender or retreat of Dumourier, and that there was a probability of the triumph of the armies of Auſtria and Pruſſia over the liberties of France, my ſpirits drooped, and I was dejected. What, Sir, could any man who loves the Conſtitution of England, who feels its principles in his heart, wiſh ſucceſs to the Duke of Brunſwick, after reading a manifeſto which violated every doctrine that Engliſhmen held ſacred, which trampled under foot every principle of juſtice and humanity, and freedom, and true government, and upon which the combined armies entered France, with which they had nothing to do; and when he heard, or thought he ſaw a probabability of their ſucceſs, could any man of true Britiſh feelings be other than dejected? I honeſtly confeſs that I never felt more ſincere gloom and dejection in my life, for, I ſaw in the triumph of that conſpiracy not merely the ruin of liberty in France, but the ruin of liberty in England---the ruin of the liberty of man. But am I to be told that my ſorrow was an evident proof of my being connected with the French nation, or with any perſon in that nation; for the purpoſe of aiding them in creating dicontents in England, or in making any attempt to deſtroy the Britiſh Conſtitution? If ſuch concluſion were to be drawn from from the dejection of thoſe who are hoſtile to the maxims of tyranny, upon which the invaſion of France was founded, what muſt we ſay of thoſe men who acknowledge that they are ſorry the invaſion did not proſper? Am I to believe that the Hon. Gentleman, and all others, who confeſs their ſorrow at the failure of the arms of Pruſſia and Auſtria, were connected with the Courts in Concert, and that a conſiderable body of perſons in this country were actually in the horrid league formed againſt human liberty? Are we taught to bring this heavy charge againſt all men, whoſe ſpirits drooped on the reverſe of the news, and when it turned out that it

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was not Dumourier, but the Duke of Brunſwick who had retreated*? No, he would not charge them with being confederates with the invaders of France; nor did they believe, nor durſt they believe, that the really conſtitutional men of England, who rejoiced on the overthrow of that horrid and profligate ſcheme, wiſhed to draw there-from any thing hoſtile the eſtabliſhed Government of England.

But what, Sir, are the doctrines that they deſire to ſet up by this inſinuation of gloom and dejection? That Engliſhmen are not to dare to have any genuine feelings of their own; that they muſt not rejoice but by rule; that they muſt not think but by order; that no man ſhall dare to exerciſe his faculties in contemplating the objects that ſurround him, nor give way to the indulgence of his joy or grief in the emotions that they excite, but according to the inſtructions that he ſhall receive. That, in obſerving the events that happen to ſurrounding and neutral nations, he ſhall not dare to think whether they are favourable to the principles that contribute to the happinneſs of man, or the contrary: and that he muſt take, not merely his opinions, but his ſenſations from his Majeſty's Miniſters and their ſatellites for the time being!

Sir, whenever the time ſhall come that the character and ſpirits of Engliſhmen are to be ſubdued; when they ſhall conſent to believe that every thing which happens around is indifferent both to their underſtandings and their hearts; and when they ſhall be brought to rejoice and grieve, juſt as it ſhall ſuit the taſte, the caprice, or the ends of Miniſters, then I pronounce the Conſtitution of this country to be extinct. We have read of religious perſecutions; of the implacable oppreſſions of the Roman See; of the horrors of the Inquiſition of Spain; but ſo obdurate, ſo hard, ſo intolerable a ſcheme of cruelty, was never engendered in the mind, much leſs practiſed by any tyrant, ſpiritual or temporal. For ſee to what lengths they carry this ſyſtem of intellectul oppreſſion. Under *various pretexts* there have been tumults and diſorders, but the true deſign was to overturn the Conſtitution---So ſays the

* The Manifeſtos of General Burgoyne, the Emperor of Germany, the King of Pruſſia, and the Duke of Brunſwick, with other State Papers, are this day publiſhed, price 1s. 6d.

Speech,

Speech, and mark the illuſtration of the Right Hon. Magiſtrate. "There have been various Societies eſtabliſhed "in the Cities of London, inſtituted for the plauſible pur- "poſe of merely diſcuſſing conſtitutional queſtions, but "which were really deſigned to propogate theſe ſeditious "doctrines." So then, by this new ſcheme of tyranny, we are not to judge of the conduct of men by their overt acts, but are to arrogate to ourſelves at once the province and the power of the Deity; we are to arraign a man for his ſecret thoughts, and to puniſh him, becauſe we chuſe to believe him guilty! "You tell me indeed," ſays one of theſe municipal inquiſitors, "that you meet for an honeſt "purpoſe, but I know better; your plauſible pretext ſhall "not impoſe upon me; I know your ſeditious deſign. I "will brand you for a traitor by my own proper authority." What innocence can be ſafe againſt ſuch a power? What inquiſitor of Spain, of ancient or of modern tyranny, can hold ſo lofty a tone? Well and nobly, ſeaſonably and truely, has the noble Earl (Wycombe) ſaid; and I would not weaken the ſentiment by repeating the expreſſion in terms leſs forcible than his own, but that the eternal truth cannot ſuffer by the feebleneſs of the terms in which it is conveyed. "There are ſpeculative people in this country, "who diſapprove of the ſyſtem of our Government, and "there muſt be ſuch men as long as the land is free, for it "is of the very eſſence of freedom for men to differ upon "ſpeculative points." Is it poſſible to conceive, that it ſhould enter into the imaginations of freemen to doubt of this truth? The inſtant that the general ſenſe of the people ſhall queſtion this truth, and that opinion ſhall be held dependant on the will of Miniſters and Magiſtrates, from that moment, I ſay, I date the extinction of our liberties as a people. Our Conſtitution was not made, thank God, in a day. It is the reſult of gradual and progreſſive wiſdom. It has grown up in a ſeries, and never, never, has the guardian protecting genius of England, been either aſleep or ſatisfied.

——— "O, but man, proud man!
"Dreſt up in a little brief authority,
"Plays ſuch fantaſtic tricks before high Heaven,
"As make the Angels weep."

Now it ſeems the Conſtitution is complete; now we are to ſtand ſtill. We are to deride the practice and the wiſdom of our forefathers; we are to elevate ourſelves with the Conſtitution in our hands, and to hold it forth to a wondering world as a model of human perfection. Away with all further improvement, for it is impoſſible; away with all further melioration of the ſtate of man in ſociety, for it is needleſs. Let no man touch this work of man, it is like the work of Heaven, perfect in all its parts, and unlike every other work of man, it is neither capable of perverſion, nor jubject to decay." Such is the preſumptuous language that we hear, and not content with this haughty tone, they imitate the celebrated anathema of brother Peter, in the Tale of a Tub, and exclaim, "G--d confound you all eternally if you offer to believe otherways."

Now this, Sir, is the criſis which I think ſo truly alarming. We are come to the moment, when the queſtion is, Whether we ſhall give to the King, that is, to the Executive Government, complete power over our thoughts. Whether we are to reſign the exerciſe of our natural faculties to the Miniſters for the time being, or whether we ſhall maintain, that in England no man is criminal, but by the commiſſion of overt acts forbidden by the law. This I call a criſis more imminent and tremendous than any that the hiſtory of this country ever exhibited. I am not ſo ignorant of the preſent ſtate of men's minds, and of the ferment artfully created, as not to know that I am now advancing an opinion likely to be unpopular. It is not the firſt time that I have incurred the ſame hazard. But I am as ready to meet the current of popular opinion now running in favour of thoſe high lay doctrines, as in the year 1783, I was to meet the oppoſite torrent, when it was ſaid, that I wiſhed to ſacrifice the people to the Crown. I will do now as I did then; I will act againſt the cry of the moment in the confidence that the reflection of the people will bear me out. I know well that there are ſocieties who have publiſhed opinions, and circulated pamphlets containing doctrines tending, if you pleaſe, to ſubvert our eſtabliſhments. I ſay that they have done nothing unlawful in this, for theſe Pamphlets have not been ſuppreſſed by la . Shew me

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the law that orders theſe books to be burnt, and I will acknowledge the illegality of their proceeding; but if their be no ſuch law, you violate the law in acting without authority. You have taken upon you to do that for which you have no warrant, and you vote they are guilty. What is the courſe preſcribed by law; if any doctrines are publiſhed tending to ſubvert the Conſtitution in Church and State, you may take cognizance of the fact in a Court of Law. What have you done? Taken upon you by your own authority to ſuppreſs them! to erect every man, not merely into an inquiſitor, but into a ſpy, into an informer! to ſet father againſt father, brother againſt brother, and neighbour againſt neighbour, and in this way you expect to maintain the peace and tranquillity of the country! You have gone upon the principles of ſlavery in all your proceedings; you neglect in your conduct the foundation of all legitimate Government, the Rights of the People, the *rights of man.* And ſetting up this bugbear, you ſpread a panic for the very purpoſe of ſanctifying this infringement, while again the very infringement begets and engenders the evil which you dread.

One extreme naturally leads to another. Thoſe who dreads Republicaniſm, fly for ſhelter to the Crown. Thoſe who deſire Reform, and are calumniated, are driven by deſpair to Republicaniſm. And this is the evil that I dread. Theſe are the extremes into which theſe violent agitations hurry the people to the gradual decreaſe of that middle order of men, who dread as much Republicaniſm on the one hand, as they do Deſpotiſm on the other. That middle order of men, who have hitherto preſerved to this country all that is dear in life, I am ſorry to ſay it, is daily leſſening; but permit me to ſay, that while my feeble voice continues, it ſhall not be totally extinct; there ſhall at leaſt be *one* man who will, in this ferment of extremes, preſerve the centre point. I may be abuſed by one ſide, I may be libelled by the other; I may be branded at one and the ſame time with the terms of firebrand and lukewarm politician; but though I love popularity, and fairly own that there is no external reward ſo dear to me as the good opinion and confidence of my fellow-citizens; yet no temptation of ſuch complacency ſhall ever induce me to join any

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aſſociation that has for its object a change in the baſis of our Conſtitution, or an extenſion of any of theſe baſes beyond the juſt proportion. I will ſtand in the gap, and oppoſe myſelf to all the wild projects of a newfangled theory, as much as againſt the monſtrous iniquity of exploded doctrines. I think the latter is more our preſent danger than the former. I ſee not merely in the panic of the timorous, but in the acts of the deſigning, cauſe for alarm againſt the moſt abhorrent doctrines. The new Aſſociations have acted with little diſguiſe. One of them I muſt applaud for the ſincerity of its practice. Mr. Chairman Reeves* ſays, that they will not only *proſecute*, but they will *convince* men, and they recommend, among other publications, a hand-bill, entitled, "A Pennyworth of Wit," in which, among other odd things, it is ſaid, "Have you "not read the Bible?—Do you not know that it is there "written, that the King is the Lord's annointed?—But "did you ever hear of his having anointed a Republic?" Such is the manner that theſe Aſſociations are to *convince* the minds of men! In the courſe of the preſent century, their recommendation would have been proſecuted as high treaſon.

In the years 1715 and 1745 to have dared to ſay that Kings derived their power from divine right, would have been proſecuted as treaſon; and I aſk you if, even now, this is the way to inculcate the principles of genuine loyalty? No, Sir; thank God, the people of this country have a better ground of loyalty to the Houſe of Brunſwick than divine right---namely, that they are the Sovereign of their own election; that their right is not derived from ſuperſtition, but from the choice of the people themſelves; that it originated in the only genuine fountain of all royal power, the will of the many, and that it has been ſtrengthened and confirmed by the experience of the bleſſings they have enjoyed, becauſe the Houſe of Brunſwick has remembered the principle upon which they received the crown. It is rather extraordinary, Sir, that they ſhould hold ſuch language at this preciſe moment, that they ſhould think it right to abuſe Republics, at the very moment that we are called upon to protect the Republic of Holland; to ſpread the doctrine that kings only have divine

* *An Anſwer to the Callumnies of Mr. Reeves, is publiſhed by the London Correſponding Society of Friends to the People: alſo a Letter from the ſame Body to Mr. Secretary Dundaſs. Price One Penny each.*

vine right may indiſpoſe your allies to receive your propoſed ſuccour. It may be aſked, Would I proſecute ſuch papers? To this I anſwer very candidly, I would not. I never yet ſaw the ſeditious paper that I would have thought it neceſſary to proſecute; but that by no means implies but that emergencies might make it proper, but ſurely there is nothing ſo eſſential to the true check of ſedition, as impartiality in proſecution. If a government wiſhes to be reſpected, they muſt act with the moſt rigorous impartiality, and muſt ſhew that they are as determined to prevent the propagations of doctrines injurious to the Rights of the people as they are thoſe hoſtile to the Rights of the Crown. If men are to be encouraged to rally round the one ſtandard, you muſt not, you ought not to prevent volunteers from rallying round the other, unleſs you deſire to ſtifle in the breaſts of men the ſureſt and moſt active principle of obedience, belief in your impartiality.

When I firſt heard that the Militia were called out I felt more anxiety and conſternation than ever poſſeſſed my mind. I thought that certainly they had heard of ſome actual inſurrection, or impending invaſion. But when I heard that they were not called out to enable Miniſters to ſend the troops to any diſtant part, to Ireland, or to Scotland, where they might know of diſturbances though I did not) but that the troops were aſſembling round London, I firmly believed the whole to be a fraud; for I have friends in and about London, as intelligent, as vigilant, as much intereſted in the tranquillity of the Metropolis, as the Right Hon. Magiſtrate; and I was confident that an inſurrection could not actually exiſt in London without being known. I pronounced it in my own mind to be a fraud, and I pronounce it here to be ſo.

I am not given to make light aſſertions in this Houſe, nor do I deſire to receive implicit belief. I deprecate confidence in my bare aſſertion. On the contrary, I ſtate, that I believe this pretext to be a fraud, and I entreat you to enquire, that you may aſcertain the truth. I know that there are ſocieties who have indulged themſelves, as I think, in ſilly and frantic ſpeculations—and who have publiſhed toaſts, &c. that are objectionable; but that there is any inſurrection, or that any attempt was making

to overthrow the Conſtitution, I deny. Now if this aſſertion of Miniſters is a falſehood, is it an innocent falſehood? Are the people of this country playthings in the hands of Miniſters, that they may frighten them and diſturb them at pleaſure? Are they to treat them as ſome weak, jealous-pated, and capricious men treat their wives and miſtreſſes—alarm them with falſe ſtories, that they may cruelly feaſt on the torture of their apprehenſions, and delight in the ſuſceptibility that drown them in tears! Have they no better enjoyment than to put forth falſe alarms, that they may draw from the people the ſoothing expreſſions of agitated loyalty? Or do they think that theſe expreſſions, generouſly, readily made, in favour of the King whom the people rationally love, may extend in its influence to all the perſons that are near his throne? Indulging in this paſſion, they may keep us inceſſantly in the tumult of apprehenſion, until at laſt they ſo habituate the mind to dread the evil in this quarter, as to look for it in no other, or to ſtun it by repeated ſhocks of fiction into an inſenſibility of real attack.

His Majeſty in the next paſſage of his ſpeech brings us to the apprehenſion of a war. I ſhall refrain at this time from ſaying all that occurs to me on this ſubject, becauſe I wiſh to keep preciſely to the immediate object: but never ſurely had this country ſo much reaſon to wiſh for peace. Never was a period ſo little favourable to a rupture with France, or with any power. I am not ready to ſubſcribe exactly to the idea of the Noble Lord; but I wiſh that a motion was propoſed by ſome perſon, to expreſs our diſapprobation of entering upon any war, if we can by any honourable means avoid it. Let no man be deterred by the dread of being in a minority. A minority ſaved this country from a war againſt Ruſſia—and ſurely it is our duty, as it is true policy, to exert every means to avert the greateſt of national calamities. In 1789 we all muſt remember that Spain provoked this country by an inſult, which is a real aggreſſion; we were all agreed on the neceſſity of the caſe, but did we go headlong to war? No, we determined with becoming fortitude on an armed negotiation. We did negotiate, and we avoided a war. But now we diſdain to negotiate. Why? Becauſe we

have

have no Miniſter at Paris. Why have we no Miniſter there? Becauſe France is a Republic! And ſo we are to pay in the blood and treaſure of the people for a punctilio! If there are diſcontents in the kingdom! Sirs, this is the way to inflame them. It is of no conſequence to any people what is the form of the Government with which they may have to treat. It is with the Governors, whatever may be the form, that in common ſenſe and policy they can have to do, and if they ſhould change their form and change their Governors, their courſe would remain the ſame. Having no legitimate concern with the internal ſtate of any independent people, the road of common ſenſe is ſimple and direct. That of pride and punctilio is as tangled as it is ſerpentine. Is the pretext the opening of the Scheldt? I cannot believe that ſuch an object can be the real cauſe. I doubt, even if a war on this pretext would be undertaken with the approbation of the Dutch. What was the conduct of the French themſelves under their depaved old ſyſtem, when the good of the people never entered into the contemplation of the Cabinet? The Emperor threatened to open the Scheldt in 1786. Did the French go to war with him inſtantly to prevent it? No. They opened a negociation, and prevented it by interfering with their good offices. Why have we not ſo interfered? Becauſe, forſooth, France is an unanointed Republic! Oh miſerable, infatuated Frenchmen! Oh lame and inconſiderate politicians! Why, inſtead of breaking the holy viol of Rheims, why did you not pour ſome of the ſacred oil on the heads of your Executive Council, that the pride of ſtates might not be forced to plunge themſelves and you into the horrors of war, rather than be contaminated by your acquaintance! How ſhort-ſighted were you to believe, that the prejudices of infants had departed with the gloom of ignorance, and that ſtates were grown up to a ſtate of manhood and reaſon!

This naturally brings us back again to the buſineſs of this day, namely, whether any Addreſs ſhould be agreed to or not? I deſire then to put it ſeriouſly to the conſcience and honour of Gentlemen to ſay, if they are not aiding the object of Republicans and Levellers, if they

ſhall

ſhall agree to plunge this country headlong into a war, or ſhall agree to do any buſineſs, or to give any pledge whatever to the Crown, until they enquire and aſcertain whether there is an inſurrection in this country or not? Shall we declare war without enquiring, whether we are alſo to have commotions at home? Shall we pledge our Conſtitutents to ſubmiſſion, to compliance, without firſt proving to them that the ſtrong meaſure of Government has been authoriſed by truth? If you would have the laws reſpected by the people, I ſay again, you muſt begin by ſhowing that they are reſpected from above If you do not prove to the people that there is an actual inſurrection (for I leave out impending invaſion and rebellion as theſe are not even pretended) you cannot withhold from them the knowledge that you have acted illegally, and how can you expect rational obedience to the laws when you yourſelves counteract them? When you ſet up the *ratio ſuaſoria* as the *ratio juſtifica*, the people clearly diſcern the ſubtility and falſehood of your logic, and tranſlate at once your terms into their true Engliſh of real cauſes and falſe pretexts. *Ut ameris, amabilis eſto* is as true in Government and Legiſlation, as it is in manners and private life, and is as well eſtabliſhed by experience. —The people will not be cheated. They will look round, and demand where this danger is to be ſeen. Is it in England—They ſee it overflowing in expreſſions of loyalty, and yet they libel it with imputations of inſurrection. In Ireland—you know there is danger, and dare not own it. Here you have prorogued the Parliament to the 17th inſtant, but not to meet till the end of January for the diſpatch of buſineſs, though you know that there is a moſt reſpectable and formidable Convention, (I call it formidable, becauſe I know nothing ſo formidable as reaſon, truth, and juſtice) will oblige you, by the moſt cogent reaſons to give way to demands, which the magnanimity of the nation ought to have anticipated. There you have thus prorogued the Parliament, and deprived yourſelves of the means of doing that gracefully which you muſt do, and which you ought to have done long ago to ſubjects as loyal, as attached to their King, as abundant-

abundantly endowed with every manly virtue as any part of the United Kingdom. And while the claims of generous and ill-treated millions are thus protracted, and in addition to the hardſhip of their condition, they are inſulted with the impudent aſſertion of the *tyrannical aſcendancy*, there is a miſerable mockery held out of alarms in England which have no exiſtence, but which have no exiſtence, but which are made the pretext of aſſembling the Parliament in an extraordinary way, in order in reality to engage you in a foreign conteſt. What muſt be the fatal conſequence when a well judging people ſhall decide, what I ſincerely believe; that the whole of this buſineſs is a Miniſterial manœuvre? Will they own the real truth, and ſay that they wanted a pretext to aſſemble Parliament to make up for their want of vigilance? They muſt take their choice, and ſubmit to incur the indignation of their country, or feel themſelves in a ſtate of contempt. There are men who in this very act give them the praiſe of vigilance. They did all this, to be ſure with a little harmleſs fraud, to prevent evils. Let us examine this their claim to vigilance.

This vigilant Miniſtry ſaw, nay, if we may take their character from their aſſociates, hoped that France was on the brink of falling a ſacrifice to the united force of Auſtria and Pruſſia, the two powers of all others, whoſe union would be the moſt dreadful thing to England, but they ſaw no danger in this conqueſt to England; though thereby theſe great military powers were to become maritime. They ſaw no danger in the union concerted between them, nay, when they had given away Poland in the mean time, becauſe I ſuppoſe they thought that when Ockzakoff was gone, the balance of Europe went with it, and they retreated out of the field with diſgrace. They gave away Poland with as little compunction as honour, and with the unenviable certainty, that their bluſtering was laughed at, and deſpiſed in every Court in Europe. I know that ſome of them have inordinate ſelf-complacency, yet I will not be ſo uncandid as to conceal my honeſt opinion, that there is not among them a ſingle man, whoſe talents for great and commanding policy have either attracted or ſecured

cured the confidence of any quarter of Europe. Do they boaſt of their vigilance? The dexterous ſurrender of Oczkakoff, as they now know, might have ſaved the fall and ruin of Poland. Do they boaſt of their vigilance, and had they no apprehenſion of the union between Auſtria and Pruſſia? Had they ſuch total reliance on the moderation of Pruſſia, on his intimate friendſhip with, his gratitude to, his confidence in our faithful Cabinet! Do they boaſt of their vigilance, and yet ſaw nothing of their preſent dread for Holland and Brabant, on the 30th of September, when to the joy of every man, whoſe heart is warmed with the love of freedom, the Duke of Brunſwick retreated before the armies of France? Were they vigilant not to forſee the conſequences of that retreat, or did they flatter themſelves with the weak, the falſe hope that ſtill the ſteadineſs of men bred up in the trammels of tactics and diſcipline, would be an overmatch for the impetuoſity of men, animated by the glorious flame of liberty? If ſo, the battle of Jemappe ought, I ſhould think, to have ſhewn vigilant men their error. That happened on the 6th of November. On the ſame day the Government of the Netherlands took to flight, and the news arrived in England on the 10th or 12th. What did theſe vigilant Miniſters? On the 17th they prorogued the Parliament to the 3d of January, without even ſaying that it was then to meet for the diſpatch of buſineſs! And yet on theſe vigilant men we are to repoſe, though in the eyes of Europe, in the hearts of Engliſhmen, an armament in their hands is a proof and earneſt of their future humilation!

They call for ſubſidiary aid from the loyalty of the people, and to procure this they have recourſe to hiſtory, and look out for the lucky frauds of the former times.—— They find one of the moſt lucky frauds was the Popiſh Plot of the reign of Charles the Second; The ſame cry they knew was impoſſible, but a ſimilar one was feaſable in the enmity againſt a Republic. The Proteſtant Diſſenters then were now made the objects of terror, and every art was uſed to provoke the rage of ignorance and barbarity. The fraud was too ſucceſsful; many of my friends

friends from the beſt motives were deluded into the ſnare, and that moſt calamitous of all meaſures, the proclamation, unfortunately for England, met with their countenance. I cannot better deſcribe this calamity than by reading a paſſage from an eminent hiſtorian, on the fatal conſequences of the deluſion of the Popiſh plot. My friends will not ſuffer by being compared to the celebrated Lord Ruſſel.

Now, Sir, let me addreſs one word to my valued friends. —Let them reflect on the conſequences of their recent deluſion, not diſſimilar to the above. The meaſure of the proclamation is now ſtated to be over. It has failed. Let them avoid all further ſnares of the ſame kind. Theſe Declarations, which it is now the faſhion to ſign, I certainly cannot in general approve. Of all that I have ſeen, that of the Merchants muſt beſt conciliate the approbation of conſtitutional men, but I ſee and hear on every ſide ſuch violent doctrines, and ſuch afflicting meaſures, as no man who is actuated by the wiſh of preſerving peace in this country can ſubſcribe to. A noble Lord, (Lord Fielding) for whom I have a high reſpect, ſays he will move for a ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus Act. I hope not. Come from whom it may, I ſhall with my moſt determined powers oppoſe ſo dreadful a meaſure.

What, it may be aſked, would I propoſe to do in hours of agitation like the preſent? I will anſwer openly. If there is a tendency in the Diſſenters to diſcontent, becauſe they conceive themſelves unjuſtly ſuſpected and cruelly calumniated, what ſhould I do? I would inſtantly repeal the Teſt Corporation Acts, and take from them thereby all cauſe of complaint. If there were any perſons tinctured with a Republican ſpirit, becauſe they thought the repreſentative Government was more perfect in a Republic, I would endeavour to amend the Repreſentation of the Commons, and to prove that the Houſe of Commons, though not choſen by all, ſhould have no other intereſt than to prove itſelf the repreſentative of all. If there were men diſatisfied in Scotland and Ireland, or elſewhere, on account of diſabilities and exemptions, of unjuſt prejudices, and of cruel reſtrictions,

I would

I would repeal the penal ſtatutes, which are a diſgrace to our law book.

If there were other complaints of grievance, I would redreſs them where they were really proved; but above all I would conſtantly, cheerfully, patiently liſten: I would make it known that if any man felt, or thought he felt a grievance, he might come freely to the bar of this Houſe and bring his proofs. And it ſhould be made manifeſt to all the world, that where they did exiſt, they ſhould be redreſſed; where they did not, that it ſhould be made manifeſt. If I were to iſſue a proclamation, this ſhould be my proclamation:

"If any man has a grievance, let him bring it to the bar of the Commons Houſe of Parliament, with the firm perſuaſion of having it honeſtly inveſtigated." Theſe are ſubſidies that I would grant to Government. What, inſtead of this, is done? Suppreſs the complaint, check the circulation of knowledge, command that no man ſhall read, or that as no man under 100l. a year can kill a partridge, that no man under 20l. or 30l. a year ſhall dare to read or think!

I ſee in Weſtminſter the moſt extraordinary reſolutions of parochial meetings---In Soho---In St. Clements, publicans are to be threatened with the loſs of their licences if they dare to ſuffer converſation which they think ſeditious. Good God, where did the Juſtices find this law? And publicans are to be made judges of a Libel. No paper is to be ſuffered but what is free from ſedition; no converſation but what they ſhall judge loyal; although the knowledge of what is a Libel was ſtated to be fit only to be judged of by Sages in the law. Yet the papers recommended to be read by theſe Aſſociations, are full of the moſt horrid doctrines. The Letter of Thomas Bull *, for inſtance, very modeſtly hints, that to exterminate the Diſſenters would be an exceſs of virtue. Debating Societies are now found to be ſeditious, though I never knew London to be without them; and by what law the Magiſtrates can interrupt the peaceable diſcuſſion of political queſtions, I cannot conceive.

* JOHN BULL in Anſwer to his Brother THOMAS. Price One Penny, or Seven Shillings for one hundred Copies.

I love

I love the Conſtitution as it is eſtabliſhed; it has grown up with me as a prejudice, and as a habit, as well as from conviction. I know that it is calculated for the happineſs of man, and that its conſtituent branches of King, Lords, and Commons, could not be altered or impaired without entailing on this country the moſt dreadful miſeries. At the ſame time I do not think ſo highly of any human inſtitution, as to believe that it incapable of being perverted. I think that we may be led aſleep to our real danger by theſe perpetual alarms to loyalty, and that the great dread of increaſing the power of the Crown, ſeems to be ſtifled, while we are inſenſibly degrading the power of the Commons."

Morning Chronicle,
14th Dec. 1792.

☞ *Mr. Fox's Speech on the Amendment of the Addreſs to the King, which related to the War, is publiſhed, Price* 2*d. or* 100 *Copies* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The following is a correct Liſt of the Gentlemen, in the Houſe of Commons, who voted for the Amendment on the Addreſs to his Majeſty, for his Speech at opening the Parliament. *The Number againſt them was* 290.

MEMBERS.	SIT FOR.
Right Honourable Charles James Fox	Weſtminſter
Charles Grey, Eſq.	Northumberland
Richard Brinſley Sheridan, Eſq.	Stafford
Right Honourable Lord G. A. H. Cavendiſh	Derby
Lord Edward Bentinck	Nottinghamſhire
Lord John Ruſſell	Taviſtock
Lord William Ruſſell	Surrey
Earl Wycombe	Chipping Wycombe
Viſcount Milton	Malton
Hon. T. Erskine	Portſmouth
Hon. Lionel Damer	Peterborough

Hon.

MEMBERS.		SIT FOR.
Hon. T. Maitland		Sedburgh, &c.
George Byng, Eſq.		Middleſex
William Huſſey, Eſq.		Sailſbury
John Crewe, Eſq.		Cheſhire
William Baker, Eſq.		Hertfordſhire
Dudley North, Eſq.		Great Grimſby
John Courtney. Eſq.		Tamworth
John Shaw Stuart, Eſq.		Renfrewſhire
Sir H. Fletcher, Bart.		Cumberland
Hon. R. Bingham		St. Alban's
J. N. Edward, Eſq.		Rutlandſhire
John Lee, Eſq.		Higham Ferrers
William Adams, Eſq.		Roſsshire
William Plomer, Eſq.		Hertfordſhire
Henry Howard, Eſq.		Arundel
R. H. Ld. R. Spencer		Wareham
Philip Francis, Eſq.		Blechingly
James Martin, Eſq.		Tewkſbury
William Smith, Eſq.		Camelford
Tho. Thompſon, Eſq.		Eveſham
B. Tarlton, Eſq.		Liverpool
Hon. St. A. St. John		Bedfordſhire
Charles Sturt, Eſq.		Bridport
B. Vaughan, Eſq.		Calne
Cunliff Shaw, Eſq.		Preſton
R. S. Milnes, Eſq.		York
E. Bouverie, Eſq.		Northampton
T. Grenville, Eſq.		Aldborough
R. Wilbraham, Eſq.		Bodmyn
John Wharton, Eſq.		Beverley
R. Hon R. Fitzpatrick		Taviſtock
S. Whitbread, jun. Eſq.		Bedford
N. Macleod, Eſq.		Inverneſhire
Joſeph Jekyll, Eſq.		Calne
T. Whitmore, Eſq.		Bridgnorth
Sir John Aubrey. Bart.		Clitherow
Sir John Jervis K. B.		Chipping. Wycombe
J. R. Burch, Eſq.		Thetford
John Harcourt, Eſq.		Ilcheſter
M. A. Taylor, Eſq.	Tellers	Poole
W. H. Lambton, Eſq.	Tellers	Durham.

The true Friends of the Conſtitution of England will rejoice to read the above Liſt, which gives the lie to all ſlanders that have been ſo induſtriouſly propogated of diviſions among the ancient and illuſtrous patriots of England. There they will find the Names of RUSSELL and CAVENDISH, of BENTINCK and HOWARD, &c. &c. rallying round the Standard, Mr. FOX has has ſo ſeaſonably erected, in concert with all the moſt ſhining talents of the Houſe, to preſerve that middle order of men, which in theſe Days of deſperate extremes, was likely to be annihilated.

FINIS.